

Statement by
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Madam Chair,

The Philippine delegation wishes to congratulate you and the members of your Bureau on your well-deserved election. We commit our full support and commitment to the successful discussion and completion of our agenda for this historic 49th Session.

Madam Chair,

As with the rest of the world, the Philippines is now gearing up towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Building from our gains in implementing the ICPD and MDGs, and addressing squarely the continuing challenges of inequitable economic growth, undeclining maternal mortality ratio, and inadequate access to reproductive health services especially among the poor, we are committed with firmer resolve to make the promise of the ICPD and SDGs a reality for every Filipino.

Madam Chair,

Allow me to share the Philippine's efforts in two complementing areas: the implementation of the ICPD in the context of the SDGs and the current state of development of the Philippine's demographic databases.

Implementing Reproductive Health

2015 marks the 2nd year of implementing the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law which was passed by the Philippine Congress in 2012, but restrained from being implemented by the Supreme Court from March 2013 until April 2014. In June this year, the Department of Health (DOH) once more received a restraining order from the Supreme Court stopping the issuance of contraceptive product registration by the Food and Drug Agency; and

the procurement, distribution and dispensing of the progestin subdermal hormonal implant by the DOH and all its instrumentalities.

Despite these restrictions, the DOH persists in strengthening and expediting access to Reproductive Health information, commodities and services, especially to poor and marginalized sectors coordinated by the National Implementation Team for the RPRH Law. This team, which I, as Secretary of Health, created in October 2014, is composed of national and regional representatives of government agencies, civil society groups and development agencies which are coming together for the first time to discuss and coordinate strategies. Among its achievements this year is the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework focused on the 5 key areas of concern for the Philippines: Maternal and newborn mortality, unmet need for family planning, teen pregnancy, HIV-AIDS, and gender-based violence.

Other NIT achievements in 2015 include:

- The reestablishment of a nationwide contraceptive logistics procurement, distribution and management system;
- The active involvement of civil society organizations and private practitioners RH service provision and demand generation, in partnership with DOH and local government units.
- The on-going effort to integrate reproductive health education in the K-12 curriculum;
- Lastly, the integration of RH efforts with those of other national agencies and development partners who are part of the NIT.

The current Philippine government commits to endorsing all these initiatives to the next administration that will come in July 2016.

Strengthening the Statistical System and Structure in the Philippines

The recent reorganization of our statistical system and structure provides brighter prospects for the generation of more reliable, timely and accessible demographic data which is central in the follow-up of the ICPD PoA and the SDGs. Republic Act 10625 or the Philippine Statistical Act of 2013 mandated the reorganization of the Philippine Statistical System (PSS) and the creation of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) which merged the major statistical agencies engaged

in primary data collection and compilation of secondary data. The law aims to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of statistical services for the government and the public.

Population Censuses. The census remains as the primary source of population data such as population size, location/distribution, age and sex disaggregation, and other socio-economic characteristics including marital status, educational information, and housing characteristics as bases for many ICPD and SDG indicators. The population census in the Philippines is being (every decade and in-between decades) to supply population data to the government and various institutions. Based on the population census, census-based population projections are also being released for forecasting development service requirements. Within the year, we hope to release the results of our latest mid-decade (2015) census.

National Thematic Survey Programs. We are also pleased to share that country is regularly conducting periodic surveys that provide demographic evidence base for tracking the SDGs in the country. These national surveys generate data for demographic and socio-economic conditions (i.e. health, education, employment, and poverty, among others) of Filipinos that are vital in national and sub-national development planning.

Demographic Evidence from Civil Registry and Vital Statistics Systems. The country has also a functional and localized civil registration and vital statistics system (CRVS) for vital events (i.e. births, deaths, and marriage). As of 2010, the registration of births is at 93% and of deaths at 66%. We continue to improve our CRVS particularly in terms of coverage, timeliness, and use of consolidated data to make it more efficient and be optimized in providing demographic and health indicators related to SDGs.

Improving Administrative Data for ICPD and SDG Progress Monitoring. From our experience of implementing the ICPD and the MDGs, we recognize the need to strengthen the country's administrative data system in reliable and meaningful progress tracking of the country's commitment to these international goals. Some of the relevant administrative data systems provide periodic information on international migration, health statistics, educational performance, employment status, and basic social service utilization data.

Other Population Databases. Through their autonomy, LGUs have likewise instituted their demographic database systems that can be used for the localization of the SDGs. Some of these databases include the Community-Base Monitoring System (CBMS) and population surveillance information system, among others.

Madam Chair,

While we have these existing sources of demographic information, we recognize the need to further strengthen these data systems to ensure inclusive development where nobody is left behind. We will work on the continuing challenge to improve and institutionalize the data system for specific demographic indicators that are SDG-related particularly those for reproductive health (i.e., maternal mortality ratio, contraceptive prevalence rate, adolescent fertility and sexuality indicators, etc.). We still need to institute regular and efficient data system to ensure the profiling of the needs and situations of marginalized sectors such as the indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, refugees, people living in hazardous and isolated areas, adolescents, and other segment of underserved population. We also work to harmonize overlapping data and to sustain pilot- and project-based survey systems and improve on the useful disaggregation of data (e.g., spatial, sex, age, income level, and other population characteristics) to facilitate more inclusive and responsive development initiatives. Lastly, we still need to work towards improving the access and utility of available data particularly for promoting evidence-based planning and policy development at all levels.

Madam Chair,

The Philippines is now in the process of firming-up our indicator system for the implementation of the SDGs in the country. By next month, we hope to come-up with nationally agreed SDG indicators so we could already focus on conceptualizing and implementing concrete SDG-responsive interventions at all levels. Lastly, we are also consolidating and mobilizing multisectoral efforts to pursue the unfinished business of the ICPD through the SDGs particularly in the context of The Filipino 2040 vision. The Filipino 2040 vision is a long term development roadmap that is anchored on the SDGs. Through this vision, we will endeavor to ensure healthy, happy, prosperous, and empowered Filipinos.

Thank you Madam Chair.